



Framing and communicating climate change: The effects of distance and outcome frame manipulations

Author(s): Spence A, Pidgeon N
Year: 2010
Journal: Global Environmental Change : Human and Policy Dimensions. 20 (4): 656-667

Abstract:

Communications regarding climate change are increasingly being utilised in order to encourage sustainable behaviour and the way that these are framed can significantly alter the impact that they have on the recipient. This experimental study seeks to investigate how transferable existing research findings on framing from health and behavioural research are to the climate change case. The study (NEuro Surveillance (Bulletin Europeen Sur Les Maladies Transmissibles; European Communicable Disease Bulletin)161) examined how framing the same information about climate change in terms of gain or loss outcomes and in terms of local or distant impacts can affect perceptions. Text on potential climate change impacts was adapted from the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, alongside maps and images of potential flooding impacts. Participants then completed measures of various relevant socio-cognitive factors and questions assessing their responses to the information that they had received. Results indicated that, *ceteris paribus*, gain frames were superior to loss frames in increasing positive attitudes towards climate change mitigation, and also increased the perceived severity of climate change impacts. However, third variable analyses demonstrated that the superiority of the gain frame was partially suppressed by lower fear responses and poorer information recall within gain framed information. In addition, framing climate change impacts as distant (whilst keeping information presented the same) resulted in climate change impacts being perceived as more severe, whilst attitudes towards climate change mitigation were more positive when participants were asked to consider social rather than personal aspects of climate change. Implications for designing communications about climate change are outlined. (C) 2010 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Source: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2010.07.002>

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Public

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Other Communication Audience: University students

Exposure : ☒

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Ecosystem Changes, Extreme Weather Event, Sea Level Rise, Temperature, Unspecified Exposure

Extreme Weather Event: Flooding

Temperature: Fluctuations

Geographic Feature: ☒

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location: ☒

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Europe

European Region/Country: European Country

Other European Country : United Kingdom

Health Co-Benefit/Co-Harm (Adaption/Mitigation): ☒

specification of beneficial or harmful impacts to health resulting from efforts to reduce or cope with greenhouse gases

A focus of content

Health Impact: ☒

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Health Outcome Unspecified

Mitigation/Adaptation: ☒

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Mitigation

Resource Type: ☒

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale: ☒

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified